## [GEIDAM]

366 The Geidam market-place represents one such focus of communal activity. It is an area 186 yards by 150 yards, with rows of permanent stalls made of grass mats, and occasional trees.
443 People are present in the market every day, buying and selling, but these are few in number and are limited largely to sellers of food staples. Wednesday is market day in Geidam, and on that day, thousands of people crowd the paths and the stalls, chatting, bargaining, buying and selling. People come into Geidam from a radius of ten to fifteen miles to attend the Wednesday market; and literally everyone in the town visits the market-place on market day at some point during the day.

361 632 As was mentioned earlier, every Kanuri town is built in a "U" pattern around an open plaza, the dandal. The over-all U-pattern is still apparent in Geidam, but since Geidam is a large town whose growth has been uneven, expansion has destroyed the [634] symmetry of the physical plan of the town. The dandal is still very much in evidence, and at its eastern face is the Ajari, the [351] compound of the District Head (Ajia) of Geidam. The dandal leads directly to the gate, or chinna of his compound, which forms a second important focus of communal activity. Much administrative activity occurs in the cleared area before the chinna of the [527] Ajia's compound. In addition, much ceremonial activity, involving displays of horsemanship by the men serving under the Ajia, [526] takes place before the chinna of his house. Many forms of recre- [535] ation, dancing and wrestling, are also held at the head of the dandal, while multitudes of townspeople gather along the borders of the dandal to watch.

173 554 562 571 [644] guilds.[1] The Ma'aram or Shehu's sister, and the Maira, the King's mother were the head women of the state. There was also a Do'oma or head of zower (unmarried divorced women) for the entire state, as well as the Gumsu, the senior wife of the Shehu. Each town had its own local head of women and head of the unmarried divorced women under the [574] titled heads in the capital. When visitors or an army regiment arrived the total community of women could easily be organized under their leaders to prepare food and proper lodging for the strangers. The titled women in the capital were invested to their offices in male robes.

178 554 562 [644] The title Do'oma (head of zower) is said to have fallen into disuse after the fall of the first dynasty at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but was revived in 1925 by Shehu Sanda. It exists today but has no reference to zower. Informants around the palace claimed that except for the title of Maira (Queen Mother, but now held by any senior patri-female relative of the Shehu), the Gumsu (the Shehu's senior wife) chooses the women to receive the titles of Ma'aram and Do'oma. 554 562 527 Although it was not observed, informants claimed that at big celebrations of state, the titled women must wear their men's robes of office, men's hats, and walk with their special men's sticks. This ceremonial transvestism emphasizes the congruency of nobility, authority, and prestige with maleness.

554 562 [431] In contemporary Bornu, the word ma'aram has come to mean the local head of the unmarried women, who are not linked very closely into any overall state organization. It is customary for the women when they marry to give her a small payment, fataka (Kanuri for two shillings) which the men give to the Lawan (Village Area Head) before the marriage. [476] The women are organized as a semi-formal work force under the ma'aram for quite traditional purposes.

(1) See below pp. 269-270.